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Communication Strategy

Coca-Cola Communication Plan in UK

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1 Summary

Last year, Coca-Cola saw its sales decreased in the UK market. In order to re-increase the sales, Coca-Cola needs to define a new communication plan.

This plan consists on the analysis of the opportunities, via a PEST and SWOT analysis. Then, the corporate objectives as well as the marketing and communication objectives are defined. Different strategies are applied to reach all targeted groups. It is explained in terms of choice of media, creative ideas and budget allocated for all the media selected. Finally, tools for evaluating the success of the campaign are described.

2 Opportunities identifications and analysis

2.1 PEST analysis

The Coca-Cola company is facing different factors' influences. To have an overview of these influences, a PEST analysis will be useful:

- Political : there is an instability of the political environment that can play against American companies.
- Economical : the world is facing a rapid change. Since the 11th September 2001, an increased instability around the world has been seen. Furthermore, a period of recession has appeared in the developed countries.
- Socio-cultural : as a soft drink, Coca-Cola is confronted to the problem of obesity that has developed in developed countries, especially in US and now in Europe. Medical specialists, by the intermediary of media, try to discourage people to drink sugar-soft drink.
- Technical : Coca-Cola company has started to make a good use of the Internet, by developing teenagers programs and games like the 'Real Coke Rush' in UK during Spring 2001.

2.2 SWOT analysis

Knowing the environment by the PEST analysis, the SWOT analysis gives more details about the place of the company in its market:

- Strengths
 - Coca-Cola is a well-known brand around the world
 - It is a company that understand its consumers.
 - It has good relations with its partners, e.g. in Europe it has been working with Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc. since several years and has built a strong partnership with them.
 - Coca-Cola Company has hired a team of talented young managers.
- Weaknesses
 - in Europe, and especially in UK, only 20% of the products are not consumed at home, by 'impulse buy'.
- Opportunities
 - Coca-Cola company is partner in many sports events.
 - It is now a multi-year partner with Warner Bros. with the release of 'Harry Potter' movie.

- In UK, it has developed the Coca-Cola Ware, based on urban street style.
- Coca-Cola company uses the environmental awareness with specific programs.
- It developed educational programs.
- Threats
 - Coca-Cola company faces a strong concurrence, named the ‘cola war’.
 - The socio-cultural problem of weight surcharge is an increasing threats for this kind of drink.
 - It is an ‘old’ brand which has been created for more than a century. It can be seen as an old-fashion brand by young people.

3 Application of principles to practice

3.1 Corporate Objectives

At the end of 2001 the company gave the shareholders several objectives:

- accelerate carbonated soft-drink growth, led by Coca-Cola
- selectively broaden their family of beverage brands in order to drive profitable growth
- grow system profitability and capability together with their bottling partners
- serve customers with creativity and consistency in order to generate growth across all channels
- direct investments to highest potential areas across the different markets
- drive efficiency and cost-effectiveness everywhere they are implanted.

3.2 Marketing Objectives

Sales in UK represent 12% of the total of Europe. It is one of the countries where Coca-Cola is a billion dollar brand. But in order to represent a larger part of the European market, the company could **increase the sales by 3% in the next 6 months, and by 5% in total for the next 12 months.**

However, as explained before, the product is more a home-consummated drink. People do not think of buying a bottle of Coca-Cola when they are outside their home. So, one of the objectives of the brand in UK would be to **increase the ‘impulse buy’ by 15% in the next 12 months.**

As a result, and to maintain the satisfaction of the stockholders, the **market shares could increase by 10% in the next 12 months.**

3.3 Communication objectives

Communication objectives will be

- To **increase the awareness** of the people facing the product **by 5% in the next 6 months.** This increase is in general, grouping all the target audiences. As Coca-Cola is already a well-known brand in UK it is not possible to increase the awareness by an important percentage.
- To emphasize the differences of the product compared to its competitors and create a **differentiation awareness increased by 20% in the next 12 months.** Coca-Cola has a specific taste that can differentiate it from other brands. The image of America links with it can also be a way to differentiate it.
- To emphasize the **brand values’ awareness by 20% in the next 12 months.**

- **To reposition the brand as younger and fun.** Coca-Cola is a brand with a long past. It can have lose its position as a brand for young people, fashionable and fun. Coca-Cola needs to reposition itself to appeal again for teenagers.
- **To maintain the brand preference among the consumers.** If Coca-Cola is the leader in UK, it does not mean that it will stay at the position in the future. So, the brand has to reinforce its penetration in leading audiences.

4 The communication strategy

4.1 Target audiences

Between 1995 and 2000, the tendencies showed that women became heavier users than men. However, in 2002, the statistics show that the tendency is again inverse. In terms of ages, there is an increase in 25-35 and in 45+ (the most important is for 45-54). But the group of 15-24 has sharply decreased in 10 years. The social groups rates are in majority constant, unless for C1 and E groups which are heavier users than previously.

Mixing all the data information, we can generate different objectives corresponding to each groups:

First, the brand needs to increase its sales in the 15-24 groups. They are the future consumers so it is important to reach them in terms of long-term objectives. Furthermore, the women who were as heavy users as men, should be targeted in preference to increase their consumption as it was two years ago.

The short-term objectives will target the 45+ age group more effectively. As it is an increasing market and after the baby-boom period, the 45+ are more numerous than ever. Also, the 25-34 group, who are the most incline to buy by 'impulse' should be targeted.

4.2 Targeting the youths: use of celebrities, art sponsorship

To appeal the younger group, it is important to apply a pull strategy. Art sponsorship will be a means for enhancing corporate status and a means for clarifying its name, it will change part of the corporate image (i.e. to make look the brand younger).

Following this idea, they can sponsor a new singer, Avril Lavigne, who is a 'soft-rock' singer who is starting to be recognised in the show-biz world. She is young and can appeal both girls and boys. Girls want to identify themselves with her while boys like her because she is pretty.

Coca-Cola can sponsor her concerts in UK, and be the only drink which can be found in her concert. Hence, the image of Coca-Cola for teenagers will be a brand which supports the new rock scene and which is more fashionable than previously.

4.3 Targeting the males: sports events

Coca-Cola is reputed for its sport sponsorships. The idea with this kind of sponsorship is to reach an extremely large audience. Indeed, sports events are followed by teams, leagues and individual supporters. In UK, the most attractive sports are Football, Rugby and Tennis. Before important competitions (e.g. Wimbledon for tennis) Coca-Cola will intensify its advertising campaign, i.e. develop a burst strategy during the events. Banners are then more useful if they can be placed around the stadium and/or inside the stadium, where people have

time to really focus on the banners. Furthermore, if they are waiting to enter in the stadium, banners can increase the impulse buy.

4.4 Targeting young adults: attract in pubs and night clubs

To appeal the young adults, a push strategy is more adapted. Young adults prefer drink alcohol when they are in a pub or a club with friends. By developing a joint venture with a whisky brand (as Clan Campbell or J&B) and by developing promotions in association with the barmen, who are seen as references in terms of drinks, in the most fashion places in big cities around UK, Coca-Cola will put the whisky-Coke as the fashion drink while clubbing.

4.5 Targeting large audience: advertising on TV and cinema

Young audience is more receptive to a campaign on TV and so, a programme sponsorship will be used. The advantage is to avoid the clutter associated with spot advertising, furthermore it is a cost-effective medium and it gives the opportunity for the target audience to make associations between the sponsor and the programme. A strategic repartition of the diffusion will be to develop an intense burst diffusion at the start of the campaign and then, light it in order to simply maintain the awareness of the product.

Big cinema complexes will be used to diffuse the new campaign. Cinema is a place where the audience can be easily targeted, according to the kind of film selected.

4.6 Targeting elderly people: advertising on press

Two kinds of audiences will be targeted by press: young and old audiences, more female than male (as women are more readers than men). Teenagers read magazines for fashion like Hello! or similar; older people read magazines for health.

4.7 others

Linking all these strategies, a profile strategy is necessary to develop a corporate image and reputation.

Also, a drip strategy can be used in order to maintain the awareness during the long time, but a burst strategy in summer, when people are sensible of impulse buy (during holidays) will be used.

5 Creative ideas

The following Gantt chart shows the planning of the different tasks:

	'00												Cost		
	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F			
Concerts A. Lavigne	█													£1m	
TV advertising burst				█										£6m	
drip						█									
Cinema advertising				█										£1.8m	
Press advertising				█										£1m	
Banners burst	█													£1.7m	
drip				█											
Sports events burst							█							£1m	
drip	█														
Cause-related Marketing	█												£0.9m		
Sales Promotion* competition	█													£1.1m	
drip				█											
Internet	█												£0.5m		
														Total Cost	£14.9m

* e.g. promotion in supermarkets, joint venture with J&B in clubs, etc...

5.1 TV and cinema campaign

A campaign on TV will be installed as a base of the drip strategy. The theme of the new campaign will be to reposition the image of Coca-Cola as more fun. For this, a derision-campaign will be used.

The symbol associated with Coca-Cola is the white bear. It will be used as the main character of the campaign, but in more original context than its own ice-pack (see appendices for the script of one of the commercials).

One of the objectives for this campaign is to increase impulse buy so, the TV drip campaign will take place during summer (from June to September, with decreasing number of expositions). At the same time, a cinema campaign will run on a burst strategy basis.

The idea is to place the white bear in an unusual context. On the beach, to remind people Coca-Cola, the bear will lye on a red towel. At the same, its snowboard will be red. Two different kinds of music will be used: one like Hawaii music for the beach and one more rock and speed for the snowboarding.

The aim of the advertising is based on several objectives: develop the idea that Coca-Cola bring you somewhere else, reinforce the idea that Coca-Cola is a refresher drink and finally add the idea of youth and fun. Other advertisements will be developed on the same theme, for example, the bear doing water-skiing, or in a club and so on.

The total advertisement will be 40 seconds. Furthermore, the start of the commercial can be cut and it can start directly with part of the snowboard scene for the second phase of the planning (from mid-July to September). It will be less costly. The campaign will then change before Christmas, with a more usual campaign with Santa Claus and which relates more the spirit of Christmas (like the one made this year).

In terms of the diffusion, a main program will be targeted: the Top of the Pops. At the start of the campaign, a number of 500 GRPs will be generated, with a focus on less expositions but for a larger targeted audience. As too many expositions is a waste of time and money (no more than three exposures are necessary), it is better to try to reach more people. For Top of the Pops, a programme sponsorship will be used, consisting on bumper advertising of 10 seconds at the start and at the end of the emission.

5.2 Press

Press advertising will be a burst campaign during end of Spring and Summer. Indeed, it is the period where people have more time to read magazines because it is the holiday time.

Two different audiences will be targeted: young and old people. Then some specific journals and magazines will be used.

In terms of creative approach, to attract young people, the advertising needs to be plenty of colours, with a more visual effect. The picture will be important and the text will just represent the brand.

For old people, the advertising need to be more factual, trying to explain the advantages of the drink against others. An advertorial will be used for them. Two ideas will be develop in it. The text will give an explanation of the advantage of the drink (help the digestion). The picture, with the grand-mother, in relation with her grand-children could help old people feel younger. Coca-Cola can help elderly people feel a greater relation with the young people by sharing the same values.

The place of the advertisement in the young magazines will be on the last cover page, as it is more visual. For elderly people, the advertisement needs to be in the right page and at the beginning of the journal (first advertisement if possible), as people are more likely to read an advertisement at the beginning of the magazine than at the end.

6 Other communication mix recommendations

6.1 Banners

The use of banners will be intensive during March and April. It will be the start of the new campaign and furthermore, it will be used to reinforced the support of A. Lavigne's concerts. The banners will be based on the same theme as TV campaign, but it will not be so detailed. So, the bear on the beach, with his sun-glasses and his bottle of Coke could appeal enough audiences. It will bring a piece of Summer during this still raining period of the year !

Banners will be displayed on buses, which are seen by a huge number of people, particularly students who take the bus to go to school/university; but also by drivers who are behind to the bus. Other banners will be displayed around stadiums, as explained in section 4.3.

And finally, general banners will be displayed in most bigger cities in UK, as London, Manchester, Liverpool....

6.2 Sports

Sports sponsorships will be developed during the whole scholar year as there is no sport competition during Summer. The sponsorship will be composed in banners inside the stadium during special events. Both the National Rugby and Football teams will be sponsored during the year.

6.3 Cause-Related Marketing

Further supports will be given to specific associations in order to increase the awareness of the corporate company (profile strategy). The cause-related marketing has an important place in public relations. By this mean, the company can be perceived as more credible, responsible and ethically sound. It is a form of differentiation which is really important in this kind of market.

Then, by being invested in important aspect of today's life, as the environment or the health, Coca-Cola will increase the idea of a company which cares of today's problems. Then, Coca-Cola can participate actively during special environmental days by giving some help for cleaning the country. The help will be for example by covering specific needs, as bin bags. They will also be invested in youth health problem, trying to develop a new model of the ideal body, more realistic.

Also, Coca-Cola will continue its sponsorship of sport associations for youth development. Its help will consist on equipment for training and help to find adequate place to train. With these three sponsorships, Coca-Cola will target a large panel of people which feel touch by the help providing by the company.

6.4 Sales promotions

In terms of sales promotions, two methods will be used: manufacturer to resellers promotions and manufacturers to consumers promotions. For the first one, the manufacturer, Coca-Cola, will encourage resellers to buy and display increased amounts of products and establish a greater usage. Coca-Cola will try to establish a brand loyalty. More precisely, a buying allowance will be used in order to increase the average size of orders.

For the second method, Coca-Cola needs to encourage competitors' users to change for its own product. Coupons can be provided to attract new users who are more price-sensitive. At the same time, this is a method that does not hurt regular consumers. Coupons will be provided by free standing inserts. This method is cost-effective for achieving short-term increases in sales. Also, a campaign will be run with special offers on the bottles, with immediate reduction.

Furthermore, a competition can be organised with a trip in US for the winner, and other prizes like CDs, T-shirts and caps for the following winners. The trip will be for 5 days for two persons and will contain places for A. Lavigne concert in California in May. The competition will be run in March and April. The design on bottles will represent a picture of A. Lavigne and the sun of California.

6.5 On-line promotion

The competition will also be accessible from the web-site. In order to stimulate the awareness of the brand, some games, downloads, screen-savers will be available from the web-site. This promotion will not be based on the product itself, but in the image that is transmitted by the brand. By developing some funny games and nice screen-savers, young people will develop word of mouth about the web-site.

6.6 Joint ventures

As explain in section 4.4, a joint venture with a whisky brand will be done in pubs and clubs. That means that special relationships will be done with specific pubs and clubs.

The whisky selected is J&B, as it is a whisky that one can use to make cocktail. The aim is to develop a new fashion about whisky-Coke. For this, barmen need to be targeted as they are references for this kind of product.

To attract young adults, T-shirts or caps will also be distributed in these pubs and clubs.

Another important point is the use glasses in pubs and clubs. Some specific glasses can be designed only for pubs, different from the ones sold in supermarkets. It is important to have different models as it will be always new when ordering a Coke (or whisky-coke !).

7 Media issues and budget

7.1 Press Budget

In order to reach the different targeted audiences, several magazines will be part of the press campaign. The campaign will be for 12 weeks, from middle-May to middle-August.

The young audience will be targeted via Hello! and OK! Magazine. These are weeklies and more oriented for young girls.

Older audiences will be targeted monthly, via Top Santé and Readers' Digest Magazines.

More generally, a TV press read by the C2DE group, What's On TV will be used, as a week-end colour magazine, Sunday, which targets the same C2DE. And Sainsbury's Magazine will be used to target a specific retailer.

The total of the budget for press will be:

	Nb of adverts	Price/unit (£)	Total price (£)
Hello!	12	12,750	153,000
OK! Mag.	12	12,250	147,000
Top Sante	5,875	3	17,625
Readers' Digest	24,500	3	73,500
Sunday	31,500	12	378,000
What's On TV	19,200	12	230,400
Sainsbury's Mag.	10,700	3	32,100
Total for press			1,031,625

7.2 TV budget

As explained before, The Top of the Pops will be sponsored by Coca-Cola. The TV campaign will consist on advertising from Friday to Tuesday on BBC1 and Channel 4. During the week, only two diffusion will be done on the evening. During the week-end, another one will be done on the morning. Furthermore, one diffusion will be performed at Five during Sunday evening's film. A burst campaign will be from June to mid-July, and the drip campaign will continue until the end of September. A second campaign will be from mid-October to end of December, only on BBC1 and Channel 4, on the evenings.

The budget for TV will be:

		Nb of week	Nb of diff.	Price/diff. (£)	Total price (£)
Top of the Pops		16	32	20,000	640,000
BBC1	week	16+6	64	15,000	960,000
	week-end	morning	12	5,000	110,000
		evening	16+6	46	25,000
Channel 4	week	16+6	64	20,000	1,280,000
	week-end	morning	12	3,000	66,000
		evening	16+6	46	30,000
Five		16	16	30,000	480,000
Total for TV					6,066,000

7.3 Cinema budget

A burst campaign will run from June to mid-July. Big complexes in major UK cities will diffuse the new commercial. One or two films will be targeted and only the evening seance on Friday and Saturday will be used. At the total, the budget for cinema will be:

1 seance * 2 days * 6 weeks * 5 cities * £30,000 = £1,800,000.

7.4 Posters budget

Two types of posters will displayed: roadside banners and buses banners. A 2000 panels Tside buses will be done during 6 weeks, while the roadside banners will be done during 24 weeks.

The budget for banners will be:

	Nb of weeks	Price/6 weeks	Total price (£)
Roadside	24	320,000	1,280,000
Buses	8	320,000	426,667
Total for banners			1,706,667

7.5 Sponsorships budget

The sponsorship of A. Lavigne will have a budget of £1,000,000 which groups her concerts and all her apparitions in TV, radio, press.

The sport sponsorship will be by support of the Rugby and Football National teams, then a budget of £1,000,000 will be provided for both of them.

7.6 Cause-related marketing budget

Three types of associations will be supported: environmental and health for youth and sport for youth development. Each of them will have a budget of £300,000. Hence, the total will be £900,000.

7.7 Internet budget

The creation of games adapted to Coca-Cola brands, as well as screen-savers may require specific knowledge. A budget of £500,000 will be needed to the creation of the games and for the adaptation of the web-site.

7.8 Sales promotion and joint ventures budgets

A budget of £300,000 will be provided for the coupons offers. Also, a budget of £200,000 will be provided to support the competition campaign (new packaging, organisation of the competition, prizes).

A budget of £400,000 will be provided to cover all the promotions in clubs. It will contain the contract with J&B, contracts with clubs all around UK (a selection of the most popular clubs in the 15 biggest cities) and different packaging designed for this use (glasses, T-shirts and caps).

7.9 Total budget

	Budget (£)
Press	1,031,625
TV	6,066,000
Cinema	1,800,000
Banners	1,700,000
Sponsorships	2,000,000
CRM	900,000
Internet	500,000
Sales promotion	500,000
Joint ventures	400,000
Total	14,897,625

The total budget is just an evaluation. It can be modified by obtaining some discounts. The price for each channels is indicative and can vary according to the date, the emission diffused and the number of needed diffusions. The price for cinema may vary, too, according to the film.

8 Agency remuneration

The agency will receive a fix fee to pay the campaign but this will remain a relatively small amount, as it will also ask for a percentage received on the sales made during the period of the campaign. The fixed fee will represent 7% of the communication budget, i.e. approximately £1m. This amount will cover the direct expenses of the agency.

The percentage perceived by the agency will represent 0.1% of the total sales. It will be more lucrative, because one can suppose that Coca-Cola will sell a huge amount of bottles in one year. It is a really big company and to be paid by percentage is not risky for the agency. On another hand, the fix fee will not cover all the expenses of the agency implied by the creation of the communication so, the agency needs to be big enough to be able to support the payment of all the expenses in advance of its fee.

9 Evaluation

Different methods exist to evaluate the achievement of the objectives. All media have their own evaluation methods. If one objective seems not to be achieved at the time it should, a new plan needs to be developed. For long term objectives, i.e. 12 months, a pre-evaluation can be made after 6 months to check the evolution of the different objectives and then, we can amend the plan if necessary before obtaining complete non success.

The evaluation is also a mean to determine the effectiveness of the plan. It allows to check that the objectives are achieved.

9.1 Advertising

To evaluate the impact of advertising, a pre-testing method will be used, consisting on showing unfinished commercials to selected groups of the target audience with a view to refining the commercial and improve effectiveness. It is based upon qualitative and quantitative criteria. So for unfinished commercials, concept testing and focus groups will be used. However, it important to notice that focus groups can be subjective and furthermore emotional commercial can affect people stronger than non-emotional ones.

For finished commercials, dummy vehicles and theatre tests will be used.

Furthermore, tracking will be used to inform an awareness levels of a commercial and image ratings of the brand. Tracking consists on interviewing people on a regular basis, with the purpose of collecting data about buyers' perceptions of the advertisement and how these advertisements might be affecting the buyers' perception of the brand. A periodic tracking is more appropriate for established products.

Finally, test of likeability will be used as it is seen as the most powerful predictor. It consists on determining if people like the advertisement or not. If people like a commercial, they are less likely to zap it when they see it again. Then, it will increase their awareness of the product. The test should be conduct in terms of meaningful, credibility and stimulation and the commercial. People can like the commercial but if there is no link with the brand, this is a failure.

9.2 Sales promotion

Retail audits will be used for the evaluation of manufacturer to reseller sales promotion, by a pre- and post-test analysis of the amount of both allocated shelf space and products taken into the reseller's portfolio.

Consumer audits, for manufacturer to consumer sales promotion will be an evaluation of the number of coupons to be redeemed.

The marketing objectives will be checked in terms of increase of sales.

9.3 Sponsorship

Sponsorship is really difficult to evaluate. It can be done essentially for sport sponsors by consumer surveys, e.g. personal interview, telephone or postal surveys. Particularly, recall tests will be used to define the impact on the memory of the target audience.

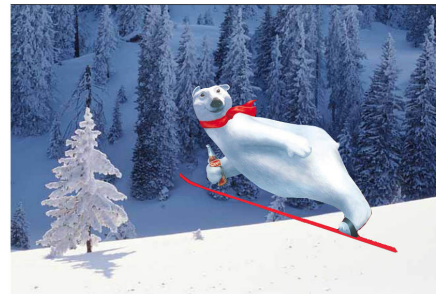
9.4 Public Relations

A corporate image evaluation should be a regular exercise, supported by management. There are three main aspects: key stakeholders and consumers should be questioned regarding their perceptions of the important attributes of the organisation they are in; evaluation of the performances of the company in each of these attributes; and evaluation of the performances in these attributes in comparison to competitors.

10 Appendices

10.1 The white bear and the snowboard

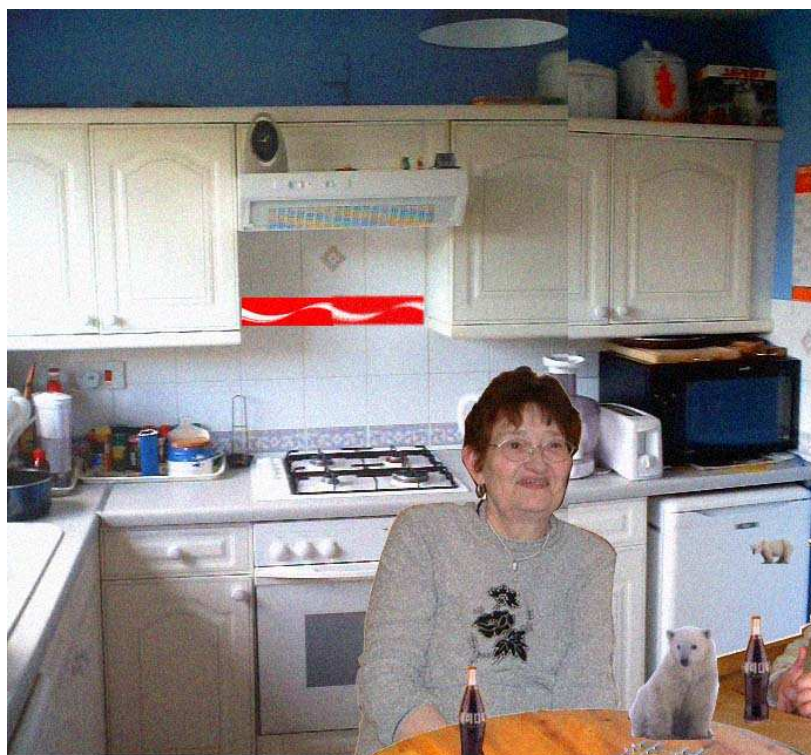
The idea is to place the white bear in the context of holidays, where the weather is really hot, which is obviously unusual for him. The white bear is lying on the beach. The weather is really hot and there is an Hawaii music on the air. It drinks a bottle of Coca-Cola. Then, by drinking it, he will feel like somewhere else colder, like in the mountains. Then, there is a focus on its sun-glasses. The music stops. We see again the white bear with its sun-glasses but it is on the top of a ski run. The bear will do snowboard which is more fashion than ski. Then, it starts to go downhill on its red snowboard. The rock music starts at the same time. It takes speed, makes some figures and then, arrives at the bottom of the slope. It drinks a bottle of Coca-Cola, focus on its sun-glasses again and come back to the beach.




10.2 Press for elderly people

There is a picture showing a grandmother with her grandchild in the kitchen, sharing a bottle of Coca-Cola. They both smile while drinking their glass of Coca-Cola. The child has a soft toy which is the white bear. On the fridge, there are magnets that also represent the white bear and a bottle of Coca-Cola. The walls of the kitchen are white with a red frieze.

At the right of the picture, there is text explaining the virtue of Coca-Cola for digestive problem: Coca-Cola was previously a medicine to cure digestive problems. Now, the taste has changed and some transformation in the ingredients and formula make the medicine also a good drink, but it still has some of its property. The text also indicated that sharing a glass of Coca-Cola with grandchildren is a good way to stay in touch and be appreciated by the children.



To share a special moment
with your grandchild,
Coca-Cola is the perfect drink.
Its special composition makes it
a good drink for digestive
problems but also its taste will
surprise you !



10.3 Press for young people

The picture takes the entire page. It represents a beach and an opened-place bar on this beach. On the left, behind the bar, we can see young people playing beach-volley and have fun. The sea is as blue as the sky and we can feel that the air is really hot. Seating in front of the bar, there is the white bear. On the bar, there is his bottle of Coca-Cola. The bottle is frozen and the bar around it is also frozen. We can feel that the bear does not suffer from the sun, because he is near is bottle of Coca-Cola.

The brand, Coca-Cola, is at the bottom of the picture.



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